

REMARKS

Claims 26-32, 35 and 37-52 are pending in this application after entry of this Amendment. Claims 26-35, 37, 39 and 41-48 are rejected. Claims 36, 38, 40 and 49-52 are objected to. Claims 33, 34 and 36 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims define allowable subject matter.

As an initial matter, if this Amendment does not place the application in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request a telephone interview between the Examiner and the undersigned.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indicated allowable subject matter in claims 36, 38, 40 and 49-52. As discussed in more detail below, Applicants have amended the claims to include the allowable subject matter to place this application in condition for allowance.

Claims 26-35, 37, 39 and 41-48 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bieman et al. (U.S. Patent 6,451,757), hereafter Bieman. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as set forth below.

Applicants have amended independent claim 26 to include the allowable subject matter in claim 36, including the subject matter in intervening claims 33 and 34. Additionally, Applicants have amended independent claim 39 to include this allowable subject matter.

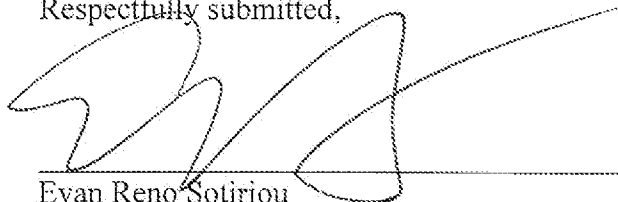
Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 26 and 39 are allowable.

Moreover, dependent claims 27-32, 35, 37, 38 and 40-52 are likewise patentable based at least on the dependency of these claims from the independent claims. Additionally, these claims recite additional subject matter not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited references.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the cited reference does not

render obvious the claimed invention and the pending claims in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evan Reno Sotiriou', written over a horizontal line.

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